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**December 22, 2003  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that Mark Anthony Wade, age 35, of Prince Georges County pled guilty Friday to wire fraud.

As part of the plea agreement, Wade acknowledged that beginning in November, 2002 and continuing until February, 2003, he and another person charged in a separate indictment devised a scheme to defraud Bridgeview Bank Group and First Data Merchant Service, two banks which provide credit card processing services to small businesses. As part of that scheme, Wade incorporated a company named Exceptional Carpet and Flooring, and applied for and received "point of sale" terminals from Bridgeview and First Data in the name of that business. Using stolen credit card account numbers, Wade then submitted fake charges for "services." The money from the merchant banks was then wired to Wade's own bank accounts. Wade also admitted that he had incorporated three other businesses using the same scheme. The total amount of the loss to the

merchant banks from the fraudulent businesses set up by Wade and others was \$737,395.85.

Wade faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a potential fine of \$250,000 at sentencing next March. The court may also order restitution in the amount of the fraud.

Wade also agreed to forfeit to the United States \$26,566 seized from his bank accounts.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna C. Sanger.